Mother's Little Helper

A MOTHER'S HEART-TO-HEART TALKS TO HER DAUGHTER

IN THREE PARTS

PART THREE

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TWELVE HEART-TO-HEART TALKS OF A MOTHER TO HER DAUGHTER

IN THREE PARTS

CENACLE CATECHISM OFFICE

PART THREE

(For girls of from 16 to 18 years)

MARIAN MOTHERS
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THE IMMACULATE MOTHER
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A. and D. H.,
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PART THREE

(To be read to girls of from 16 to 18)

INSTRUCTION IX*

My dear child,

It is quite a long time since I read to you the first one of these instructions, and during that time you have been developing rapidly, both mentally and physically, so that you have now entered upon the first stage of young-ladyhood.

Yet, although you are now a young lady, it is important for you to remember that you are as yet a very, *very* young and unexperienced young lady. Young ladies, you know, range all the way from fourteen years to thirty and over; and since there is a vast difference between a girl of fourteen and one of eighteen, and again between one of seventeen or eighteen and one of twenty-five; so it follows naturally that there should also be a difference between the privileges accorded to young ladies of different ages and circumstances. The time of youth, to which young ladies belong, is a time of preparation for mature womanhood. And because this preparation is stretched out over a number of years, it would be folly to give a girl in her early teens the same freedom that is granted to a girl in her twenties. The younger girl is not yet prepared for so much freedom. She is not aware of, and above all she

*These instructions are intended to be read by the mother to her daughter in a private interview. (See Foreword to Part One.)

does not realize, the dangers of such freedom; and in consequence she would not make the right use of it.

That is why Almighty God has imposed on parents the solemn duty of guiding and guarding their children most carefully especially during the years of adolescence, i.e., of young manhood and young womanhood. It would be much easier for parents to let their children do as they please; just as it would be much easier for a pastor or confessor to let his parishioners or penitents do as they please, and not be continually warning them against dangers and urging them to practice virtue. But just as a pastor is responsible for his people, so are parents responsible for their children; and they will have to render a strict account to God, if through their lack of watchfulness and their easy-going yielding to their children's desires, they are the cause that their children suffer harm.

You see, my dear, there are still many dangers to the welfare of your body as well as your soul, of which you are unaware. And even if you have perhaps been told of them, you have at least never experienced them; and hence you cannot realize how great the danger is, but must simply take the word of your parents and spiritual adviser for it and avoid those things which they know would prove harmful to you.

I have read you an instruction on the chief one

of these dangers; viz., that which results from the so-called sex appeal or sex attraction. You will remember that I told you that God put this mutual attraction in men and women so that persons of one sex would be attracted to persons of the opposite sex and they would thus be led to contract marriage at the proper time. That is the sole object and purpose of this attraction. God did not give men and women this attraction towards each other merely that they might enjoy each other's company. No; it was put in us to lead up to marriage; and, therefore, if a man or woman has absolutely no intention or no possibility of ever getting married, he or she does wrong to run the risk of arousing this sex attraction and becoming exposed to the proximate occasion of sin.

And this same risk of becoming exposed to grave danger of sin is incurred not only by those who never intend to or cannot marry, but also by those who do not intend to or cannot marry *within a reasonable period of time.* And the reason is this. Since this sex attraction is intended to lead to marriage, and after marriage to the marital embrace, and thus to bringing children into this world, if a girl is several years too young to marry and nevertheless begins to associate with individual boys, she runs great risk of falling prematurely in love and of then being led by her passionate attachment to permit im-

pure liberties (often called "petting" or "necking") or even the marital embrace. Such things are not at all manifestations of true love, which aims to promote another's true welfare; they are rather the result of yielding to the physical promptings of sex appeal, or, to state it bluntly, to the passion of lust. If you only keep in mind what a strong appeal any normal girl's physical attractions make to any normal boy, your head will not be turned by the fact that they show great interest in you; and you will not imagine that you must possess great personal charm. On the contrary, you should rather fear that the boys take to you rather than to other girls, because they think that you will be an easy mark and will readily permit the liberties they seek.

But even supposing, what is *very* improbable, that there would be no danger of your yielding to the boys' impure desires, you should avoid early company-keeping in order not to expose them to the danger of falling in love with you. You have no right to use your feminine charms to attract young men merely to show your power or to enjoy their attentions or to have them show you a good time and then to drop them cold-bloodedly when you notice that their interest in you is serious. Many a young man has been driven to drink and other bad habits after a girl who led him on for the sake of a good time finally jilted him and broke his heart.

Even when you will be old enough to seek a partner for marriage, keeping company will be full of dangers. But if you take proper precautions and have constant recourse to prayer and the sacraments, you can confidently count on God's help and protection. This is by no means true, however, when boys and girls who are too young to marry rashly expose themselves to these dangers merely in order to have a good time. And in their case, the dangers are the harder to overcome on account of the weak condition of their undeveloped characters.

* * *

INSTRUCTION X

My dear child,

When I warned you against the dangers of premature company-keeping, I realized quite well that the thought would probably come to you: "But nearly all the high-school girls of my acquaintance are keeping company. Are they, then, all doing wrong?" They may not all have fallen into the sins to which they are exposing themselves, and charity requires us not to think evil of them; yet it is nevertheless true, even though they may not know it, that they are doing wrong to expose themselves to such dangers; and experience proves only too often that ignorance does not shield them from the sad consequences

of not avoiding those occasions of sin. Please impress this truth indelibly on your mind, my child: *The fact that something is being done by the majority of people does not prove that it is right.* If we want to adopt as our standard what we see the majority of people doing, then there will soon be no religious or virtuous people left in the world.

You see, my dear child, this is not a Christian country in which we live. *More than half* the people of the United States do not belong to any church at all; many do not even believe that there is a God; and even among those who call themselves Christians there are many who do not believe that Jesus is God. So since a great many Americans are practically pagans; since they do not accept the teachings of the Catholic Church regarding purity and the sacredness of the marriage contract; and since they know nothing whatever about sanctifying grace and the terrible evil of losing it, it is not surprising that they do things that are dangerous to the welfare of their souls; and that they make little or nothing of sins which a Catholic knows to be mortal.

Suppose you did not know anything about the value of sanctifying grace and did not believe that there is a hell; would you hesitate long to commit a mortal sin if you got a lot of pleasure out of it and were in no danger of being caught? Well, there are thousands and millions of your

fellow Americans who know nothing of sanctifying grace and do not believe in hell; and do you think that their conduct can be a safe guide for you to follow? But it is just the conduct of such people—of half-believing Protestants and Jews, of practical pagans and downright atheists that has gradually come to constitute the standard of morality adopted by a vast number of our countrymen.

And when Catholics go to see movies and plays, and read magazines and books in which the characters act according to this low moral standard, they, too, become contaminated by these false principles of morality. They gradually come to think that what so many people do cannot be so bad; and since we are all more prone to evil than to good, they easily try to persuade themselves that the Church is too strict, and that certain practices are not as bad as she makes them. And so it happens that, although these Catholics learned at school that they must avoid dangerous occasions of sin, they quiet their conscience by saying that certain improper dances, indecent shows, immodest styles, and dangerous intimacies between boys and girls may be indulged in because "everybody is doing it."

I know quite well that if certain girls were told that they are too young to have boy friends, they would reply: "Well, can't a girl have any fun at all? Some people want to take all the joy out of

life." But such a reply would be both foolish and unjust. Are girls so helpless that they cannot have any fun without boys? A girl should be ashamed to admit that. And I know it to be a fact that not only many girls under eighteen but even in their twenties have clubs which meet regularly at the home of one of the members, and they have a most delightful time without any boys present.

And as to the accusation that parents and priests and others who object to boys and girls keeping company at an early age, want to take all the joy out of life, nothing could be more unjust. The motive and object of such parents and priests is to guard the young folks' happiness by protecting them against their own imprudent desires. You know very well that a child often wants to have something, e.g., a knife, a pistol, or certain food, which no one who loves the child would permit it to have, because it would only prove harmful to it. Now the same is true also of boys and girls who are just entering manhood and womanhood. Anybody must admit that the parents of a girl of sixteen or seventeen have had more experience and know more about life's dangers than the girl herself; that is, supposing that the girl is a good girl and has not been permitted to run wild. And since such a good girl cannot reasonably question her parents' love for her and their wisdom in placing certain restric-

tions on her conduct, she ought to observe these restrictions gladly and thank Heaven that she has parents who do their duty and try to promote her real welfare and happiness.

In view of all these facts, my great love for you prompts me to give you the following advice in regard to your relations with boys; namely, to put all thought of keeping company out of your mind until you are eighteen years old; that is, till you are old enough to think of marrying and of keeping company for the proper purpose of finding a suitable partner. That is the only way that you can succeed in guarding your heart from becoming entangled in one of those early love affairs which are so premature and so displeasing to sensible people that they are called by the contemptuous name of "puppy loves."

That does not mean that you must run away or cross the street in order not to meet a boy whom you spy at a distance. Neither does it mean that you must never, never meet any boys socially at home gatherings or parties in company with other boys and girls in the presence of your or their parents. What I mean is that there should be no pairing off of one boy with one girl; and that in going to and from such social gatherings a girl not of age should not have a boy friend as her companion but a girl or her brother or parents. You can readily understand that there is infinitely more danger of a boy and a girl growing

intimate, of exchanging endearments, and of falling in love when they are by themselves than when they are in a crowd. Hence you should not have any individual "dates" with boys; all invitations to go out with a boy, whether to a movie, a dance or party, a street-car or automobile ride, should not be accepted; and you should *on principle* and for safety sake so guard your heart and its affections that you will not incur the risk of becoming entangled by any love affair before your eighteenth birthday.

If you have thus guarded your heart and strengthened your character by self-denial until you are really old enough to marry, then you can step out of your retirement like a queen and meet and associate with young men and be courted by them for the true purpose of company-keeping; namely, for the purpose of seeking a life mate with whom to establish a home and a family after the pattern of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

Many of your friends will no doubt call you old-fashioned and foolish, or perhaps even sneer at you, if you follow my advice in this matter. But you can afford to smile at, or rather pity, their ignorance and delusion; for you are better informed and wiser than they, and your course of conduct will bring you not only greater blessings but also greater and more lasting happiness in the end.

INSTRUCTION XI

My dear child,

In the instruction on purity, I already called your attention to the reverence you owe to your body because it is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Ignorance or disregard of this sublime truth is undoubtedly one of the reasons why so many people think that they may use their body as they please without any regard for its dignity and sacred character. Added to this, as another cause of the deplorable lack of modesty in so many people, is ignorance or the denial of original sin and its consequences for soul and body.

It is true that the soul's white robe of sanctifying grace, which was lost by the sin of Adam, is restored in Baptism through the merits of the Precious Blood of our Blessed Redeemer. But the body's robe of innocence as well as its armor of immortality, which were both likewise lost by original sin, are not restored in this life. In consequence of this loss, just as it is necessary for man to guard his body by clothing against the danger of death and the ravages of disease; so it is also necessary for him to cover his body and its members in order that his gaze may not fall on objects that stir up his passions and he become a prey to his own body's unruly animal desires.

Now these two facts, the dignity of the body as a temple of the Holy Ghost, and the concu-

piscence or inordinate animal cravings of the body which resulted from original sin, demand the observance of certain precautions in regard to the body both in our own private conduct as well as in our relations with others. As I have already warned you how to conduct yourself in the care you must needs extend to your body, I shall now explain how you should act in your dealings and association with others, in particular with those with whom the dangers are greatest and most frequent, namely, with persons of the opposite sex.

Although as intelligent beings, we can communicate with one another, e.g., by signs and speech and by writing, without any bodily contact and even without any close proximity, still, as beings that have a body as well as a soul, we very naturally crave the company of persons of flesh and blood like ourselves; and the more common our interests, the more intimate our relations and the greater our mutual affection, the closer and the more intimate we like also our bodies to be. This is not only natural but also proper; and the practice of cultured and virtuous people proves it to be a fact. And what is more, the practice of self-respecting people in this point is based on those two truths I have just pointed out; namely, the reverence which the body deserves as a temple of God, and the reserve to be exercised in regard

to bodily contacts that may tend to stir up concupiscence.

This will become much clearer to you when I proceed to details. Is there not a vast difference between the distance at which you keep perfect strangers, passing acquaintances, distant relatives and ordinary friends; and bosom friends, close relatives and the immediate members of your family? You would not walk arm in arm with a girl with whom you have only a speaking acquaintance. Still less would you and she be seen walking along with an arm around each other's waist. Those are bodily contacts reserved for close friends. A lady does not even extend her hand in greeting when she is introduced to a gentleman by a common friend. And if she is a real lady, no gentleman who is not closely related to her will receive the salutation of her lips.

So you see, my dear child, how the practice of respectable people draws a sharp line of distinction between the physical tokens of regard that they bestow upon persons with whom they come in social contact. Some they greet with a nod; to some they offer their hand; to others they may give an arm; but only to intimate friends and relatives, their cheek or lips. And the reason is that in all these tokens of love and esteem there are greater or lesser degrees of sacredness, which would be entirely eliminated if the more inti-

mate endearments were bestowed indiscriminately upon all.

Above all, kisses and embraces should be regarded as something very sacred; and no girl who is free with her kisses can safely be predicted as one who will make an ideal wife and mother. She shows herself too flighty, too cheap. If she herself sets so little value on her lips and cheeks that she readily yields them to different boys, then she will be very apt to permit also other liberties that will soon lower her self-esteem still further and in the end destroy her virtue. But when a girl has led such a life before marriage, there is danger that she will not be content with the love of one man after she becomes a wife and mother.

From this you can conclude what is to be thought of those parties where so-called kissing games are played, and where the sacred character of the kiss is degraded, cheapened and coarsened by being imposed as a penalty in games of chance. If you ever think of yourself as a future bride, is the boy you picture as your ideal husband a boy who has bestowed his kisses on numerous other girls? Or is he not rather a boy who held his lips in reserve for the girl of his dreams,—the girl who promised to become his wife and the mother of his children? But if you would like a husband who had saved his kisses

for you, do you not think it proper that you should also hold your lips in reserve for him?

Believe me, my dear child, this levity and reckless abandon with which so many young people treat the matter of kissing and caressing, is one of the chief causes that leads them to indulge in downright impure liberties with each other and even into the terrible sin of arrogating to themselves while still single the sacred privileges of the married state. Yes, some unmarried young people even perform the marital act together; and if the girl becomes a mother in consequence, in very many cases, to hide her sin she adds the sin of murder to that of impurity by mercilessly killing the helpless babe in her womb.

These are terrible things, my child,—sins in fact that cry to Heaven for vengeance; but they are the natural consequences of that utterly pagan custom of our day of allowing mere boys and girls to keep company as if they were of marriageable age; and not only that, but of according them practically as much privacy in their associations with each other as if they were actually married. And, from living side by side with people who have these low moral standards, many Catholics who know better or certainly should know better are also led astray and fall into these same awful sins.

It is hard to explain, but it is a fact that Catholics are sometimes worse than non-Catholics in

this respect, and that non-Catholic girls sometimes have higher standards than Catholic ones. Just listen to what the conductor of the woman's department in a non-Catholic daily paper says on this subject in reply to a letter from a girl named Susie: "A boy told Susie, she is the kind of girl that men forget, and Susie is broken-hearted over the remark. She says she is pretty, a snappy dresser, that she kisses the boys any time they ask her and can't see anything wrong in it in spite of what old fogies say. She can go to a party and drink hootch, smoke cigarettes, and never forget herself. She doesn't mind if the men do 'neck,' because she can tell them where to get off before they go too far.

"Wonder if Susie herself has not given a pretty fair picture of the kind of girl men forget. Let's look at this girl you've presented here, Susie. How would you sum her up? Isn't cheap the word? Isn't the cheap girl the one men forget—because there isn't anything about her worth remembering? Men do not forget the girl who puts enough value on herself to repulse their too familiar advances. They do not forget the girl who knows you cannot demand respect by words when your conduct belies them. In her they brush up against something clean and fine that leaves an impress. The girl men don't forget, Susie, is the one who reminds them of

the better stuff they're made of. The cheap girl doesn't. That's why they forget her."

So there you have the conductor of a department in a secular daily paper setting down the girl who is free with her kisses as the cheap girl—the kind that men forget. And listen to what another woman column-writer in a non-Catholic daily says: "By throwing away your favors, girls, by letting all sorts of boys kiss you and hold you in their arms, you really do spoil marriage. You never can go back, never can know the fresh sweetness of belonging to one person; the pride of being all purity and trust and kindness for that one alone."

But how can you refrain from giving a kiss if it is imposed as a penalty at a party you attend with other Catholic girls and boys of your age? Simply by refusing to do so. Let it be known right at the start that you will not take part in any kissing games nor execute any penalty that involves kissing. And if you thus show that you have courage enough to dare to be different, and explain the reason for your stand, the better class of your girl friends will probably follow your example and content themselves with games more suited to self-respecting young ladies and gentlemen. And even supposing you should run into such a kissing penalty entirely unexpectedly by surprise, who can make you carry it out? Are your companions not young *ladies*

and *gentlemen?* If so, how can they compel you to kiss a boy? But if they are not ladies and gentlemen, then turn your back on them, put on your hat and coat and go home. The idea of anybody being able to make you kiss a boy against your will!

I must call your attention to one more point and then I will bring this long instruction to a close. I spoke before of kissing leading to downright impure liberties. A girl would be guilty of permitting such liberties if she allowed touches on her breasts, on her limbs or body close to the private parts, and of course on the private parts themselves. All such deliberate touches are mortal sins; and so too, are all actions (kisses included) that are indulged in with sexual pleasure; because, as I explained in a former instruction, the enjoyment of that pleasure is most strictly restricted by Almighty God exclusively to the holy state of Matrimony.

It is true, of course, that not every kiss between a boy and a girl is always and necessarily a sin. There may be light and hasty kisses indulged in by thoughtless young folks that are not sinful; but the step from such kisses to venially sinful kisses is very swift. And when kisses become eager, ardent, and often repeated or long drawn out, they are practically always mortal sins, because they naturally arouse sexual passion—if not in the girl, at least in the boy.

You knew from your Catechism that you are obliged to avoid dangerous occasions of sin; but you probably did not know till now how much danger lies in actions so commonly looked upon and represented on stage and screen as harmless tokens of endearment. Hereafter, therefore, if anyone tries to convince you that kissing, embracing, fondly holding hands and similar actions between unmarried persons of opposite sex are perfectly innocent and legitimate pastime, you will know better and you will doubtless also thank God that you were warned in time. As knowledge alone, however, will not save you when you are tempted by the enticements of the flesh, continue to strengthen yourself by the devout recital of the three Hail Mary's for purity at your morning and evening prayer and by the frequent reception of the Sacraments.

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INSTRUCTION XII

My dear child,

In the last instruction that I gave you (quite a long time ago), I explained to you that, as the purpose of keeping company is to find a suitable partner with whom to enter the holy state of Matrimony, boys and girls should not begin to keep company until they are of marriageable age. As to-day is your 18th birthday and you

are now of marriageable age, the time is very opportune for me to give you some advice as to what you should do and what you should avoid during this romantic period of your life.

In order to get the correct view of company-keeping and to take the proper attitude toward it right from the start, it is necessary to bear in mind that the time of courtship is *not a state of life* but a period of transition; and that love-making is not to be engaged in for its own sake or for the sake of the pleasure it affords, but as a preparation for the state of Matrimony. Hence, if a girl has decided to enter the convent, she should not begin to keep company at all.

There is no denying the fact that for the average girl whose vocation is the married state, the time of courtship holds some of the sweetest joys of life. But these very joys themselves point to marriage as their culmination; for back of the lover's present enjoyment of each other is always the thought and the hope that their present all too brief hours of companionship will one day be crowned by a life-long inseparable union in the home of their dreams.

But if the time of courtship is a time of preparation for marriage, it follows necessarily that when a girl enters that stage of her life, she should give serious thought to the obligations which the married state involves. Many a girl looks upon the day of her coming of age

merely as the day of her emancipation from the restrictions of girlhood and of her entry upon a period of absolute independence. Such a view is not only wrong but dangerous as well. A girl who is of age may not simply do as she pleases—go and come as she pleases—but still owes her parents not only love and reverence but also obedience as long as she remains under the parental roof. Prudent parents will, of course, gradually grant her a considerable amount of independence in order to accustom her to decide and act for herself; but they are still responsible for her and should gently yet firmly use their parental authority to shield her from forming dangerous habits and companionships.

The reason why you should now give serious thought to the obligations of marriage is because, if you do not do so before you fall in love, you will not be likely to do so afterwards. The fact is that the mentality of a girl in love usually admits of no serious reflection on the sterner things of life, and in consequence sees no need of preparation for the duties of married life. All the more reason, then, for you to do some serious thinking now. What would you think of a young man who would want to be ordained priest without having seriously contemplated the obligations of the priesthood, and without having striven to fit himself for the proper performance of his duties as a priest?

But the candidate for the married state also faces most serious and difficult obligations—to himself, to his partner in marriage, to his children, to God and to the Church, to his country and to society at large; and it would be folly for anyone to expect to fulfill all these obligations without having prepared himself for them beforehand.

Now the first thing, my dear child, that a girl contemplating marriage should bear in mind is that the familiar fairy tale ending "And they lived happy ever after" does not represent the actual course of marriage in real life. Marriage means crosses and sacrifices, anxieties and disappointments, labor and suffering, just the same as the priesthood and the religious state. And only they who are willing and unselfish enough to sacrifice their own ease and comfort for the designs of God and the good of others in Matrimony, will achieve success and find true peace and happiness in that state.

What the designs of God are in regard to Matrimony are expressed very aptly by the two terms "Matrimony" and "conjugal state." Matrimony, from the Latin words "matris munium," means "office of mother;" and the office of mother is none other than the office of bearing and rearing children. You see, then, how wrong it would be to enter the married state with the intention of shirking the very purpose and office of Matri-

mony in order to continue to lead a life of ease and pleasure and personal independence as before. To do that would be just as wrong as for a man to enter the priesthood and assume the office of pastor and then to shirk the duties of his office by refusing to preach, to say Mass, to hear Confessions and to visit the sick.

The word "conjugal" comes from the Latin word "conjugium," which means a joining together by a yoke. A yoke, you know, is not a decoration like the bridal wreath, but something binding two together for a common work. The conjugal state, therefore, is the state of a man and a woman who have assumed together the yoke or obligation of laboring together to achieve the purpose of the married state; namely, the rearing of a family.

It is evident, then, that marriage is not a sinecure but a serious vocation. But that is also the beautiful thing about Matrimony, just the same as about the priesthood, that its reward, as far as it is realized here below, comes precisely from the unselfish performance of its obligations. Or what do you think is the greatest earthly happiness that comes to the girl who enters the married state? What is the greatest thrill of her life? Is it that moment, so sung in story, when her beloved prince charming elicits her promise to become his bride and presses the first sacred kiss on her chaste maiden

lips? No, my child. Is it perhaps that long desired moment when, with wedding bells aringing, and amid the organ's trembling tones, she accepts her fiance's pledge of fidelity "till death do us part?" Again I say, No, my child. Neither is it the pleasure attending the marital embrace, by which marriage is consummated and the marriage tie made indissoluble. For, although in that embrace husband and wife become so completely one that, as the Bible expresses it, they become "two in one flesh," still it is not in that act itself but in the result that God intended to produce through it that a Christian wife finds her greatest joy.

Yes, dear, the supreme thrill that comes to the happily wedded wife is that which fills her soul when she clasps her first-born to her mother's breast and sees in it not only the joint product of its parents' love, but also the union of their own very substance into a new being, in which each can trace the beloved features of the other, and which will exist forever as a monument of their love.

Add to this the mother's further happy thought that by the assiduous performance of her maternal duties, by her prayers, her instructions, her wise counsels, training and good example, she can mould this child into a beautiful character that will be a joy to men and angels and give glory to God for all eternity, you will

understand clearly how true it is that the most worth while and lasting joys of wedded life come from the unselfish fulfillment of the sacred office of motherhood. That is the reason, too, why Our Blessed Savior Himself said: "When a woman hath brought forth a child, she remembereth no more the anguish (of childbirth) for joy that a man is born into this world" (Jo. 16, 21).

Only if you view marriage in this light, will you be likely to escape those moral pitfalls which so often prove disastrous to girls who are keeping company. For, viewing marriage as a serious matter, you will also regard courtship, which leads to marriage, as a serious matter; and in weighing the qualifications of the young men you meet, you will judge of their fitness for your companionship and for your hand not by their ability to offer you a good time but by their ability to bear the yoke of wedded life and to fulfill the duties of father to your children.

Fortified with this serious outlook on courtship, you will not allow it to degenerate into a dangerous though pleasurable pastime. And realizing that the kissing and embracing so often indulged in during this period may easily become a serious occasion of sin (even more so to the boy than to the girl), you will not permit it until you are engaged, and then only sparingly

and with great caution. There will be little danger of your failing in this regard, if you receive your gentlemen friends at home with other members of the family present; which is the proper and Christian way to entertain your friends. Every boy and girl whose intentions are honorable will welcome the presence of others as a safeguard against their own weakness and as a proof of the innocence of their relations. To say that there is no danger in their being alone together is like saying that you may put straw and live coals together without danger of fire. The custom of chaperonage, therefore, is dictated not only by Christian prudence but also by plain common sense; and the practice, so pernicious in its results yet so common nowadays, of according young couples almost as much privacy and seclusion as if they were married, is condemned even by decent pagans.

It is idle to say that the boy and the girl should pray and receive the Sacraments often and remember their dignity, and then there will be no danger if they are alone together. "He that loveth danger will perish in it!" Their first duty is to *avoid* the danger; and when that is impossible, they must use both natural and supernatural means to pass through it unharmed. Should you, therefore, at any time happen to be alone with a young man, you

should give him clearly to understand more by your deportment than by words that he must keep his distance and keep his hands off your person. And do not make the terrible mistake of thinking that because *you* sense no danger and because *your* passions are not aroused by certain contacts, there is no danger for the young man either. Just because God intended that the man should court the woman and not the woman the man, He gave man a nature far more responsive to sex appeal than that of a woman. And because in the relations between the sexes man is the aggressive party, God gave woman an innate sense of modesty, coyness and timid reserve for her own protection. It is only on the supposition of a girl's utter ignorance of this difference in the sexes that I can understand how a girl can sit on a boy's lap and then be surprised or even indignant when he regards her action as an invitation to take liberties.

Most of your girl friends would perhaps laugh at the cautions here given; but by observing them, my child, you will not only spare yourself many a pang of conscience but you will also preserve the physical endearments of love in all their freshness for your married life, when they can be indulged in for their proper purpose of easing the burdens of wedded life, cementing more firmly the marriage union, and keeping

alive some of the romance of love long after the days of courtship are over.

Having devoted the greater part of this instruction to impressing upon you the serious nature of marriage and courtship, let me in conclusion help you to realize the sacred character of the marriage act. You will no doubt remember that in a previous instruction I stated that the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, like the Sacrament of Holy Orders, gives rights and privileges as well as obligations and powers not enjoyed by those who have not received this Sacrament. Now the great privilege of married couples is to co-operate with Almighty God in bringing new intelligent beings into existence; just as it is the privilege of the priest to co-operate with God in bringing Jesus Christ upon our altars. To bring an immortal being into existence is so solemn an act that when God created the first man, He did not simply say, "Let man be made;" but calling upon the other two persons of the Blessed Trinity, He said: "Let us make man." Then, having formed a human body out of the earth, He breathed into it an immortal soul, and man became a living image and likeness of God Himself.

What a distinction it would have been for the great sculptor Michelangelo if God had said to him: "Come, let us make a living statue of Myself. I will direct you how to make it out

of your own materials and with your own instruments; and then I will breathe into it an immortal soul and it will exist forever as the joint product of your skill and My power."

Such a distinction is actually granted by Almighty God to all parents. In His infinite wisdom God placed the instruments and the materials for making an image of Himself in the parents' own bodies, fashioning the latter in such a way that in the marital embrace the husband's generative organ fits into that of the wife. And in His infinite love, God ordained that as a climax to that loving embrace, a precious substance containing the germ of life is transmitted from husband to wife to be united with a similar substance in her womb for the formation of a tiny human body. In the very same instant that those two elements, the father cell and the mother cell, unite in an eternal embrace to form a body, God creates in it an immortal soul; thus making a living image of Himself, an indestructible link between husband and wife, and an everlasting memorial of their mutual love.

And thus you see, my dear child, what a wonderful and sacred act the marital embrace is, and what an intimate union God has established through it between your dear father and mother and your own dear self.

March 23, 1936.

FINIS.

What One Catholic Mother Says
of
"Mother's Little Helper"

"I have read all of these instructions and I cannot find words to express my opinion. I think they are beautifully given. I know every mother would be happy to be able to guide her daughter along these lines. The way these facts are explained is just the way I should like to give them to my daughter, and the way I would have been so grateful to have been told when I was ready for them."